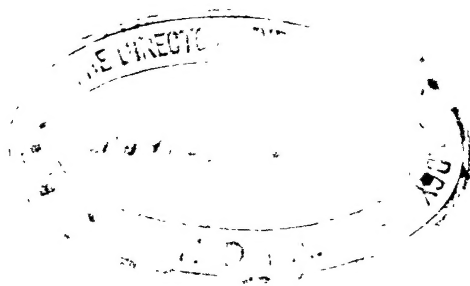


VARENDRA RESEARCH SOCIETY'S MONOGRAPHS

No. 2

MAHASTHAN AND ITS ENVIRONS

(WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS)

BY

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VARENDRA RESEARCH SOCIETY,
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NOTE.

This monograph has grown out of a short paper on 'the antiquity of Mahasthan,' read by the author, Mr Prabhas Chandra Sen, B.L. of Bogra, on 22nd. April, 1926, at a literary conference of the Society. The delay in its publication has enabled Mr. Sen to develop his original theme and add a chapter describing Mahasthan and its environs, making his account of this famous but little explored site a complete and up-to-date one. Written with local knowledge and observation, the monograph has further gained in value by the addition of appendices, illustrations and a map. The Society is much obliged to Mr. Sen who has helped us to add some valuable antiquities to our museum, for contributing this useful monograph in spite of his engagements as a busy lawyer and the handicap of having to carry on his researches in a small mofussil town where few archæological or historical books are available. With only the limited resources of a private individual he has prepared the map which tells more eloquently than any words can do, of the archæological importance of the locality and the need for its exploration.

The Society is obliged to the authorities of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for the loan of their block of the Mahasthan inscription and permission to print the extracts from their Journal which form appendices II and IV of this monograph.

We are also very glad to acknowledge that the cost of this publication has been kindly contributed by the two branches of the zamindar family of Talanda, Rajshahi District, *viz.*, that of the text by Rai Sahib Kunjamohan Maitra and that of the illustrations by Messrs. Brajendramohan Maitra, M.A., B.L. and Gopikulamohan Maitra.

Varendra Research Society,
August, *1929.*

BIJAYNATH SARKAR,
Hon. Secretary.

MAHASTHAN AND ITS ENVIRONS.

I. DESCRIPTION.

The Situation of Mahasthan

The archæological excavations at Paharpur, begun in 1922 and resumed after a break of two years in 1925, have revealed some remarkable antiquarian remains, such as a copper-plate of the Gupta period, clay seals of the Pāla period, a stone inscription pointing to the rule in North Bengal of the Gurjara-Pratihāra king Mahendrapāla of Kanauj, besides the remains of a huge terraced temple, decorated with terra-cotta plaques and stone sculptures and of a type of building unknown before in Indian architecture (*London News*, Jan. 29, 1927, p. 160; *Modern Review*, April, 1928, p. 502). The north-east corner of the Rajshahi District in which Paharpur is situated juts into the Bogra and Dinajpur Districts; and for considerable distances on both sides of this frontier in all the three districts, there are numerous sites, from which ancient inscriptions, coins, sculptures and other antiquities have been recovered from time to time. Roughly speaking, this tract extends from Damodarpur in the north to Dhanaidah in the south, a distance of about 100 miles, and from Bangarh in the west to Mahasthan in the east, a distance of about 60 miles.

In this wide tract the ruins of Mahasthan-garh, on the west bank of the Karatoya river, some 8 miles north of Bogra town and some 30 miles east of Paharpur, are a prominent landmark. They consist of the ruins of a huge fortress, or city about a mile square, with brick mounds, old tanks, high embankments and other relics of antiquity clustered round them for some miles south, west and north, as is shown in the accompanying map.

Its present importance

The place is still held sacred by the Hindus and is visited by thousands of pilgrims for a bath in the Karatoya at a certain conjunction of the planets, known as the Nārāyaṇī-yoga, which occurs in the month of Pausha or December once in about twelve years. A fair is also held here every year, on the last day of the Bengali year, about the middle of April.

It is also held sacred by the Muslims, as it contains the tomb of their saint, Sultan Balkhi, and a mosque dating from the Mughal time.

Sir Alexander Cunningham visited Mahasthan in 1879 and identified it with the site of Paundravarddhana, the capital city of the ancient *bhukti* or province of that name, frequently mentioned in the records of pre-Muslim days.

The Scope of this Monograph

I propose to describe first the principal ruins and antiquities found at Mahasthan-garh and the neighbourhood which apparently formed its suburb in olden days and then discuss such historical data as are now available along with the question of the identity of the site with Paundravarddhana city.

The ruins generally stand out as brick mounds, called 'dvīp' or 'dhāp' with some fanciful names attached to them, and are interspersed with innumerable tanks which invariably have a north and south direction and some of which are now dried up and turned into fields.

Much of the matter presented here was collected by me some years ago and then incorporated in my Bengali work, *Bagurār Itihāsa*, published in 1912 (of which a second edition is now in the press). I have now revised the old account in the light of further studies and brought it up-to-date. In this account (as in my *Itihāsa*) I have drawn on the contributions of my predecessors, notably, O'Donnell, Beveridge and Cunningham. My map is based on the Revenue Survey maps in the Bogra Collectorate office.

Origin of the Name

The earliest mention of the name Mahasthan occurs in verse 59 of a small Sanskrit work called the *Karatoyā-māhātmyam* ascribed to Paraśurāma. (see Appendix I). In this work Paundravarddhanapura and Mahāsthān are treated as synonymous terms (verses 9, 24 and 59) and it is said that the place received the latter name because of the nineteen specialities with which it was endowed by Paraśurāma (v. 59). In this work, Śiladvīpa (v. 34), the Nārāyaṇī-yoga (v. 37) and the Skanda and Govinda shrines (v. 56) are mentioned.

The name next occurs in the form of 'Mastangarh' in a *sanad* dated 1096 H. =1685 A.D., re-affirming the settlement of the service at the shrine of 'Mir Syed Sultan Mahmud Māhisawar,' together with the income from 'Mastangarh and the land comprised within the bend of the river,' on certain persons, (see Appendix II).

The historical significance of these two records will be discussed later.

The Garh

The ruins of the garh are described by O'Donnell (*J.A.S.B.*, 1875, p. 183), Beveridge (*J.A.S.B.*, 1878, p. 89) and Cunningham (*Archæological Survey Report*, Vol. XV, 1879-80, p. 104).

From the *District Gazetteer* of Bogra we learn that the late Mr. Umesh Chandra Batabyal, who was the Collector from 1894 to 1896, left an account of the garh in the Collectorate office, and that an exploration of the site with excavations was carried out by the District Engineer, Mr. Nandi, in 1907.

The ruins consist of a nearly oblong terrace about 15 ft. in general elevation above the country, surrounded by brick ramparts, with corner bastions, (see Fig. 1). The terrace is about 5000 ft. in length from north to south, and 4000 ft. in breadth, and is studded with isolated mounds. It appears to have been originally protected on the east by the river Karatoya and on the other three sides by a moat, the remains of which are still visible. The moat on the south is now known as the Bārānasī khāl, that on the west as the Gilātalā khāl, and that on the north as the Kālīdaha sāgar, the last being an off-shoot of an extensive *bil* of that name.

Entrances to the Garh

The rampart being dilapidated, the present entrances are mere openings in it. The main one is on the west and is known as the Tāmradvāra, or 'Copper gate.' There is another entrance of probably a later date on this side, south of the Tāmradvāra, through which the present road to Bihar passes.

On the east side there are at present three entrances, *viz.*—

(1) A flight of stairs at the south-east corner leading to Shah Sultan's shrine and the mosque, apparently built in Muhammadan times.

(2) The 'Dorab Shah gate,' a little north of it and connected with a brick-paved road which passes through the west rampart towards Bihar.

(3) An opening further north, leading out to 'Śilādevīr ghāt' on the Karatoya.

On the north side there are two openings, one called 'Sanātan sāheber gali' leading out to Govinda dhāp and Pātharghātā on the Karatoya river, and the other to Ghāgarduār village across the Kālīdaha *bil*.

On the south side the entrance is known as 'Burir darwaza,' which leads to the Bārāṇasī *Khāl*.

Roads in the Garh

There is at present one regular path in the fort, that which leads westwards from the Dorab Shah gate and goes on to Bihar village. A branch from it runs northwards for a short distance and then bifurcates, one arm going westwards to the Tāmradvāra and the other eastwards to Śilādevīr ghāt. A network of roads connects the garh with the country around.

Mosque of Farrukh Siyar's time

From the few stone sculptures that have been found so far, the surface of the garh appears to consist of the ruins of Hindu or Buddhist structures, except at the south-east corner which was subsequently occupied and built over by the Muslims. Coming up by the steps at this corner we pass by a tomb which is called 'Harpāler samādhi,' and reach the top where there is a number of tombs of the Muslim zemindars of Selbarsa Pargana, and of the khadims of the mosque. West of these tombs there is a small mosque with a single elegant dome surmounted by a pinnacle of glazed terra-cotta. There are similar but smaller pinnacles in the parapet.

Over the entrance there is a rectangular tablet of black stone bearing an inscription in Persian which gives the date of the mosque as 1130 H. corresponding to A.D. 1718, the year 7 of Farrukh Siyar's reign. (see Appendix III). The tablet measures 18″ × 9″.

Shah Sultan Balkhi's dargah.

North-east of the mosque is the enclosure containing the tomb of the saint. The two stone jambs of the entrance are carved in a Hindu style and are inscribed with the words 'Śrī Narasiṁhadāsasya' (or the gift of Narasiṁhadāsa) in Bengali characters of the 17th century. The name has not yet been identified. The tomb itself is a large-sized white-washed mound situated in the centre of the yard with no dome over it. Near the quadrangle there is a white-washed rectangular masonry platform which is said to mark the site where the saint offered his first prayer. Outside the entrance is a large circular 'gaurīpaṭṭa' of black stone, with the usual spout but without the *liṅgam*. From this and other stones (mostly black basalt) which occur here, the site appears to have been occupied by a Hindu temple, before the Muslim shrine was built.

The Legend of Shah Sultan and Śilādevī.

The current legend of the overthrow of the Hindu rule at Mahasthan by the Muslims is thus narrated by O'Donnell (*J.A.S.B.*, 1875, p. 185) :—

'Mahasthan bec me a seat of orthodox Hinduism, and the worship of Siva

was celebrated with much fervour. Within a radius of a mile, a hundred thousand *liṅgas* are said to have been set up in honour of that god. About the end of the thirteenth century, according to the most generally accepted traditions, Mahasthan was the capital of a minor Kshatriya prince, named Paraśurāma. At that time the Muhammadans had conquered Gaur, and driven the last Hindu dynasty out of Nadiyā, and their arms were beginning to be pushed to Eastern Bengal. It was then that a humble *fakir* or religious mendicant appeared before Paraśurāma, and begged for as much ground as he might cover with his *chāmrā*, or skin, kneeling on which he might say his prayers. The Hindu prince granted his request, and the *fakir*, turning towards the west, began to pray. Scarcely had he done so when the skin began to expand, and before he had done, it covered nearly the whole principality. Paraśurāma called his troops together and attacked the *fakir*, but to no purpose, as he and they perished in the battle. Paraśurāma had one daughter, the beautiful Śilā Devī, whom the conqueror, who bore the name of Shah Sultan Hazrat Auliya, now claimed as his prize. The Hindu princess pretending to accept her fate, found an opportunity of stabbing him, and then threw herself into the Karatoya. A steep part of the bank, where there is now a flight of stairs, still bears the name of Śilā Devī's Ghāt, and in Hindu hymns the favourite name for Mahasthan is 'Śilā Dvīpa' or the Island of Śilā. The word 'island' draws attention to a change which has taken place in the river Karatoya. It at one time divided into two branches near Mahasthan, reuniting again about a mile north of the present town of Bagurā. The western branch is now the little stream Subil.'

The 'Jiyat-kund' well near Paraśurāmer Bāri figures in this legend. It is said that the water of that well resusciated the fallen soldiers of Paraśurāma until it was polluted by the Muslim invaders. The story was put in verse about 1890 by the late Mr. Taylor of the Bogra District Board. A similar story is current in connection with the Muslim conquest of Pandua, near Hugli, (*Proc. A. S. B.*, 1870, pp. 183ff) and of some other ancient cities, *e.g.*, Paithan on the Godavari.

The legend is narrated in a latter day Bengali ballad named *Sultan Balkhi* published in 1285 B.S. (=1881 A.D.), in which with some puzzling historical details it is stated that Shah Sultan hailed from Balkh in Central Asia and came to Paraśurāma's court at Mahasthan from the court of Nawab Shaista Khan at Hisya Sandvipa.

The ballad will be discussed later along with evidence of a more reliable character furnished by the *sanad* of 1685 granting Mahasthan village for the

service of the shrine (Appendix II) and the establishment about the same time of a Muhamadan zamindari in Selbarsa, in which the *pirpal* of Mahasthan subsequently merged. The Selbarsa zamindars are still the mutwalis of the shrine, though they are now split up into three branches, *viz.* the Chaudhuris of Kundgram, the Chaudhuris of Sibganj, and the Khan-Panis of Karatia in Mymensing District (representing the Paikar branch).

Finds of Pathan Coins at Mahasthan

Though from the above as well as other evidence it appears that Muslim predominance was not established at Mahasthan till about the end of the Mughal rule, the coins found in the garh itself (and recently in the Govinda mound close to it) all belong to an earlier period *viz.* the Pathan. The earliest of these is a silver coin of Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (A.D. 1339-58) which was found in 1874 along with a number of coins of Mahmud Shah I (1442-1459) (see Appendix IV). In 1879, Cunningham found one coin of Jalaluddin Muhammad (1418-1431) and two of Mahmud I.

Regarding the first find, Mr. Beveridge notes (*J.A.S.B.* 1878, p. 95):—

'In 1874, a pot of old rupees was found in the village of Mahasthan by a labourer who was digging a ditch in a *pan* garden. The owners of the *pan* garden wrested the coins from him, and were convicted, rather harshly I think, of robbery and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. On appeal, their sentence was reduced to three months. Some of the coins were bought from the owners by Major Hume and were afterwards sent to the Asiatic Society. One coin was lying in the Magistrate's Mālkhānāh, and has been sent by me to Professor H. Blochmann. I have also sent down two other silver coins which are said to have been found at Mahasthan.' In a footnote, Beveridge adds, 'The three silver coins are—(1) a silver tankāh of Shams-uddin Ilyas Shah of Bengal, as published by Thomas in his *'Initial Coinage of Bengal.'*

'(2) A silver tankāh, struck in 862 H, by Mahmud Shah I, of Bengal as figured in this *Journal*, for 1875, Pl. XI, No. 7. The reverse is the same as in Nos. 5 and 8 but the reading is still doubtful.

'(3) A silver tankāh by the same king, of coarse manufacture, similar to Nos. 2 and 3, of Pl. XI, *loc. cit.*'

Regarding a later find Cunningham notes (*A.S.R.* XV., p. 117): 'I also obtained three of these rupees found in Mahasthan. One of them belonged to Jalaluddin Muhammad, and the other two to Mahmud I. One of them is dated in A. H. 846, and the other in A. H. 848. The first coin is in very fine order.'

After some fifty years, a few more coins of Ilyas Shah and Mahmud Shah have been found close to Mahasthan, in the course of the recent excavation of the Govinda mound, by the Archæological Department.

Khudār-pathar Dhāp

About 200 yards to the north-west of the dargāh is a mound which is named after an enormous door-sill of granite stone which lies on it. The stone measures about 10′×2½′×2½′ and has a floral design on its face, while the top is recessed and provided with two socket holes for the door shutters, 6 ft. apart. According to the *Gazetteer*, all round this stone excavations were made in 1907 to a depth of 5 ft. when a stone pavement was reached. During this excavation several carved stones were obtained, one of which measuring 2′ 3″ by 8″ by 7″ (Fig. 4) is now in the Museum at Rajshahi. It contains 'three seated Buddha figures in a line, of which the middle one is in the meditative pose and those on the two sides in the earth-touching pose. Each figure is placed within an arched niche. At the left end is a devotee seated with folded hands.' (*V.R.S. Annual Report* 1926-27, Museum Notes, p. 2). This points to the temple being Buddhistic, though Cunningham (*A.S.R.*, XV, p. 105) classed the 'massive door sill' as that 'of a Hindu temple.'

Mānkhalir Dhāp and Kund

About 400 ft. further north is another mound with a *kund* or deep pit lying at its foot. From this mound Cunningham obtained 'a considerable number of carved bricks, such as are always found in the ruins of temples, and which still exist *in situ* in the fine brick temple of Bhitargaon. There were mouldings of cornices of many varieties, portions of undulated eaves, and of āmalaka fruits of pinnacles of a temple.' He got also 'twelve square terra-cotta alto-relievos, and one small pilaster or baluster, which formed the upright of two of these panels of a long frieze.' They were all of coarse workmanship and of soft red brick, but of much variety in the designs—including men in various positions, a wheel, a ram, a bull, a tiger, a caparisoned horse, a parrot, an unknown bird, a lion sitting to front, a circular lotus flower. Along with these he obtained 'two old bronze figures of Gaṇeśa and Garuḍa, and a fragment of blue stone pedestal with the end of an inscription in mediæval Nāgarī characters reading *nāgrahāra*' (Cunningham, *loc. cit.*, pp. 106, 108-9, Pl. xxxi).

Cunningham derived the name of the mound from a 'Rājā Mān Singh' who was said to have preceded 'Rājā Paraśurāma.' Some persons suggest that the

mound is named after the Muslim Māṅkālis of Ghoraghat, who were such a power in North Bengal at the close of the Pathan rule. (Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*). A more probable derivation of the name is from the Jaina apostle Goshala who was called Māmkhali-putra (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, June. 1927, p. 236). In 1912, I collected at this mound the torso of a crude and unfinished Jaina image, which Cunnigham also appears to have noticed and which is now in the Museum at Rajshahi, and the prevalence of the Jaina faith at Pauṇḍravarddhana is attested by the *Avadāna-kalpa-latikā* as well as Hiuen Tsang's *Travels*.

The Mahasthan Sanskrit Inscription

East of the mound and outside the fort-wall there is a tank (Fig. 1) in re-excavating which in 1919, a fragment of a stone inscription was found, which is now in the Museum at Rajshahi (Fig. 7). A great part of the inscription including its date and the name of its original site is missing. The script is of the ninth century A.D.

All that we learn from the remnant are the names of some members of a Nandi family, one of whom is said to have attained prosperity at Gopagriha, which may possibly be identified with the present village of Gokul.

The fragment was first published by me in the Bengali monthly *Bhāratavarsha*, Srāvan, 1326 B.S. and later by Mr. Haridas Mitra in *J.A.S.B.*, 1922, pp. 439 *et seq*.

Parasuramer Bāri

This mound is situated some 600 ft. north of Mānkhāli dhāp, with the 'Jiyat-kund' or 'Well of Life' near it. According to the *Gazetteer*, p. 157, two rooms of modern date were found inside the mound in the excavations of 1907.

The 'Jiyat-kund' well has a diameter of 14 ft. at the top, diminishing on account of offsets as it goes deeper. 'The descent to the water was made by isolated stones projecting from the wall.' Near it lies a huge granite stone carved with the 'elephant trunk' design probably of the Gupta age.

Bairāgīr Dhāp

This mound is situated at some distance north of Paraśurāmer bāri and not far from the northern rampart wall. Recent excavations (made here by the Archæological Department) have revealed the remains of a group of brick-built temples, in one of which two massive stone pilasters of the Gupta age were apparently used afterwards to form a drain, and in another, a little south-east of the former, was found a massive stone pillar probably of the Pāla age.

Narasimher Dhāp

A little to the north-east and close to the rampart there is an elevated ground, with this name. The inscriptions on the door-jambs of Shah Sultan's dargah may possibly have been connected with it.

Silādevīr Ghāt

This ghat is situated some 200 yards east of the garh, opposite the Bairāgīr dhāp, and on the Karatoya river. Cunningham, following O'Donnell, placed this ghat higher up the stream, near the Govinda mound. But this is contrary to the opinion of the Hindus, who always resort to the lower site for their Pausha-Nārāyaṇī bath.

As O'Donnell hints and Beveridge clearly puts it, 'the legend of the beautiful Śilā Devī has its origin in a mispronunciation. The original name of the place is Siladwip' (*J.A.S.B.*, 1878, p. 91). That this is so is evident from verses 37 and 30 of the *Karatoyā-māhātmyam* and the *saṅkalpa* or vow for the Pausha-Nārāyaṇī bath, which are said to be prescribed in the *Kṛitya-chintāmaṇi* of Vāchaspati Miśra :—

चापार्कें मूलसंयुक्ते यदि सोमदिने कुहुः। नारायणीति विख्याता त्रिकोटिकुलमुद्धरेत् ॥ ३७
स्कन्दगोविन्दयोर्मध्ये सोमवारे कुहुतिथौ। प्रातर्म्मौनेन यः स्नायात् कुलकोटीः समुद्धरेत् ॥ ३०

ॐ विष्णु ॐ तत् सत् अद्य पौषे मासि धनुराशिस्थे भास्करे कृष्णे पक्षे सोमवाराधिकरण-कामावस्यायान्तिथौ * * गोत्रः श्री * * कृतपापक्षयपूर्व्वक शिलाद्वीपावच्छिन्नस्कन्द गोविन्दयोर्मध्ये त्रिकोटिकुलोद्धरणकामः प्रातर्म्मौनेनास्यामहं स्नानं करिष्ये इति सङ्कल्प्य स्नायात्।

That is, Śilādvīpa is the place for the bath at the Nārāyaṇī-yoga or the conjunction of the Sun in the Dhanu *rāśi* (Archer) with the Moon in the Amāvasyā *tithi* and the Mūlā *nakshatra* on a Monday.

The name Śilā-dvīpa was probably derived from the 'hundred thousand' Śiva *liṅgas* which, as O'Donnell observes, were said to have been set up within 'a radius of a mile,' at Mahasthan (*J.A.S.B.* 1875, p. 185). V. 16 of the *Karatoyā-māhātmyam* refers to this in the words—*Pauṇḍre Koṭi-śilā-dvīpe.*

Skander Dhāp

This mound stands in *mauza* Bāghopārā about two miles south of Mahasthan-garh and east of the road from Bogra town. It probably marks the site of the Skanda temple referred to in the *Karatoyā-māhātmyam* as one of the limits of the sacred ground of Mahasthan, the temple of Kārtikeya of Pauṇḍra-

varddhana city mentioned in the *Rājataraṅginī*, and the Skanda-nagara of the *Rāmacharitam* (III. 9.).

Gokul

Between Skander dhāp and Mahasthan-garh lies the village of Gokul, which may be identified with Gopagriha of the Mahasthan inscription mentioned before. Through it a road leads westwards joining the Khetlal road at Chandnia hāt. There are several mounds and tanks in this village pointing to its ancient importance. The two bigger mounds are now-a-days connected with the legend of Manasā (as related in the local ballad of *Padmapurāna*) and called respectively 'Lakhindarer Merh' and 'Netai Dhopani Pāṭ.' The Merh (Fig. 5), which still retains a great height, appears to have been surrounded by cells arranged in terraces. On the top of the mound there are the remains of a floor.

Rāmsahar

South and west of Gokul is the village of Ramsahar in which there is a low mound called Khāmār.

Palāsbāri

West of Gokul and touching the south-west corner of the garh, is the village of Palāsbāri. From the number of old tanks and other ruins as well as its proximity to Mahasthangarh, the place may very well be identified with Palāśavṛindaka, from which the Damodarpur copper-plate of Budhagupta's time is purported to have been issued (*Ep. Ind.*, *XV*, p. 136).

Chāndnia-Haripur

Proceeding west along the road and crossing the dried up Āto nālā, we enter the eastern arm of Haripur village, in which there is a big mound. called Dhanvantarī (referring no doubt to the Manasā legend). In the western arm of the village, lying west of the *hāt* and the Bogra-Khetlal road. is an elevated ground, which extends westwards into Rojakpur. It contains several mounds now called Rāstalā, Shashṭhitalā etc. The elevated ground borders on the Somrāi *bil*. Some people connect the name of the village with Hari who, according to the *Rāmacharitam*, helped the Kaivartta chief Bhīma in his struggle with Rāmapāla.

Saralpur and Atovāla

Between the two arms of Haripur is the village of Saralpur, the eastern section of which bordering on the Āto is called Ātovālā. In this section there is a small mound which is considerably encroached upon by fields on its north.

Here probably once stood a temple of much beauty and importance, as in its neighbourhood have been found a fine gilt bronze image of Mañjuśrī of about the 5th century A.D. (Fig. 2, also *Annual Report, V.R. Society*, 1926-27, Notes, p. 5 ; and 1928-29, p. 19) and an ingeniously perforated terracotta moulding for a cornice (*Annual Report, V.R. Society*, 1928-29, p. 20). It is said that until recently a road could be traced connecting this mound with Mahasthan-garh. Another bronze image of a Bodhisattva from near about Mahasthan is now in the Museum at Rajshahi (Fig. 3 ; also *Annual Report, V. R. Society*, 1927-28, Notes, p. 4).

Besides the Balāi dhāp there are other mounds in Saralpur village, *e.g.*, Dalu-mājhir bhiṭā, between the road and the *bil* near Chandnia hāt.

Bāmanpārā

About half a mile north of Balāi dhāp, at the south end of Bāmanpārā village near the point where its boundary meets those of the Ātovālā (Saralpur) and Palāsbāri villages, there is a considerable mound called Kānāi dhāp. Recently a school house has been erected on its top, and in digging for earth for it some granite blocks have been exposed to view.

A road from Mahasthan passes through Bāmanpārā westwards to Hukmāpur where it meets the Teghar-Bihār road. Bāmanpārā is being linked up southwards, through Saralpur, with the Khetlāl road and northwards, through Chingāspur, with the Sikandrābād-Bihār road, which is being extended eastwards to meet the Sibganj road in Ghāgarduār village.

It was in Bāmanpārā that about the year 1862 a number of gold coins was found, out of which Mr. Beveridge obtained two, which he forwarded to the Asiatic Society in Calcutta for identification (*J.A.S.B.*, 1878, p. 95). They were both Gupta coins, one of Chandragupta II and the other of Kumāragupta (Cunningham, *A.S.R.* XV, p. 116).

Three more coins of Chandragupta II obtained from Dāmāi, a village under police station Kuhloo and 8 miles south-west of Mahasthan, are in the Museum at Rajshahi (*Annual Report, V. R. Society*, 1927-28, List of coins, p. 3).

Mathurā

East of Bāmanpārā and extending up to the garh on the east and the Kālidaha *bil* on the north, is the village of Mathurā, in which there are several tanks, and on a ridge overlooking the Gilātalā moat, two mounds called Paraśurāmer Sabhābāṭī and Yogīr Dhāp.

Rojakpur

Proceeding westward along the road from Gokul to Haripur, we pass into the western arm of the latter village. already referred to, and meet the Bogra-Khetlal road near the Chāndniā hāt. West of Haripur and south of the Somrāi *bil* is the village of Rojakpur, into which, as already stated, the elevated ground from Chāndniā hāt extends. On this ground are two mounds called respectively Chāndbhiṭā (probably refering to the Manasī legend) and Dhanbhāndār. A little further west is another mound called Siṅghināth Dhāp.

Baghahāli

West of Rojakpur, on the south-west end of the *bil*, in the village of Bāghahāli, there is a big mound called 'Sālban Rājār kāchāri,' while about a mile and a half south-west of it, in the village of Arora (as will be described later), there is a big mound called 'Sālban Rājār bāri.' The identity of this Sālban will be discussed in connection with the latter ruins.

Yogīr-bhavan

South west of Bāghahāli (beyond Chak Bariāpārā) and some 3 miles west of the Khetlal road is a settlement of the Nātha sect of Śaiva sannyāsīs, known as Yogīr-bhavan, forming the eastern section of Arora village. An account of this settlement is given by Beveridge, *J.A.S.B.*, 1878, p. 94. It occupies about 80 *bighas* of land and forms the headquarters of the sect, of which there are branches at Yogīgophā and Gorakh-kui, both in the Dinajpur District, the former in its south-west part some 5 miles west of Pāhārpur, *J.A.S.B.*, 1875, p. 189, and the latter in its north-west part some 4 miles west of Nekmardan.

The mantra of the sect is as follows :—

ॐ गुरुजि। ओङ्कारे आदिनाथ। उदयनाथ पार्व्वती। सत्यनाथ ब्रह्मा। सन्तोकनाथ विष्णु। गजवेलगजस्कन्धरनाथ। अचले अचम्भनाथ। ज्ञानपारग सिद्धचरङ्गीनाथ। मायारूपी मत्स्येन्द्रनाथ। घटे पिण्डे ओशम्भुज्योतिः गुरु गोरक्षनाथ। नवनाथके नाम जप सम्पूर्ण ह्याय॥

The origin of the sect is referred to by MM. Haraprasad Sastri (*Rāmacharitam* p. 12) thus :—

'A class of men who attained success in their austerities and yoga-practices were regarded as superhuman beings or Nāthas. They were objects of veneration and they had a large number of disciples. Ādinātha. Matsyendranātha, Mīnanātha and others stuck to their Buddhism. But Gorakshanātha, who was

originally a Buddhist under the name Ramaṇavajra, became a Śaiva, and was hated by the Buddhists as a renegade. These introduced a form of secret and mystic worship, which, with political changes in eastern India, brought about the downfall of Buddhism in this country.'

The shrines at Yogīr-bhavan are situated in the south-west corner of an enclosure or *maṭh*. One of them called Dharmma-dungi, bears a brick inscription, reading *sarvva-siddha sana* 1148 *Śrī Suphala* . . . . (the year =1741 A.D.). In front of it is another shrine called 'Gadighar,' where a fire is kept burning at all hours.

Outside the enclosure are four temples, dedicated respectively to Kālabhairava, Sarvamaṅgalā Durgā, and Gorakshanātha. The Kālabhairava temple contains a Śiva *liṅga* and bears a brick inscription reading *Śrī Rāmasiddha sana* 1173 *sāla* (=1766 A.D.) *āmale Sri Jayanātha Nara-Nārāyaṇa*. The Sarvamaṅgalā temple contains three images of Hara-Gaurī, one of Mahishamardinī, a fragment of an Ashṭa-mātṛikā slab, a fragment of a three-faced female figure probably Ushnīshavijaya (*Sādhanamālā*, II. pl. XIV) and a four-armed female figure playing on a *vinā* (evidently Sarasvatī, but worshipped here as Sarvamaṅgalā). Over the entrance is a brick inscription reading 1089 *Meher Nātha sadaka śrī Abhirāma Mehetara* (the year=1681 A.D.). In the Durgā temple is a stone image of Chāmundā, and in the Gorakshanātha one, a Śiva *liṅga*. There are three brick built *samādhis* near the latter temple.

There are several tanks, ot which the Phuldīghi and the Dadhisāgar lying south are the largest.

Arorā

South-west of the Dadhisāgar and standing on the Masāndīghi, in Arorā village, is Sālvan Rājār bāri referred to under Bāghahāli. This Sālvan may possibly be the same as king Sālavāhan, son of Sāhila-deva of the Chamba inscription who won the title of Kari-ghaṭa-varsha (=Kuñjara-ghaṭā-varsha ?) (R. C. Majumdar, 'Vaṅge Kāmbojādhikāra,' *Vaṅga-vāṇī*, Chaitra, 1330 B.S. p. 251, *Ind. Ant.*, XVII. pp. 7-13). Beveridge refers to this mound in *J.A.S.B.*, 1878, p. 95.

This name of Sāhila seems to occur again in *Sāhilāditya lakshmaṁ* in v. 10 of the Silimpur inscription (*Ep. Ind.*, XIII, p. 291).

If this identification is correct, then the word *Kuñjaraghaṭāvarsheṇa* in the Bangarh stone inscription (*Gauḍa-rāja-mālā*, p. 35) is really the title or *virudha* of the Gauḍapati of the Kāmboja family and not the date of the inscription.

Teghar

North of Chāndniā hāt the road skirts the *bil* and comes to Teghar village which juts out into the *bil*. Near about here are several mounds, such as Narapatir dhāp, Kācher āṅginā (or glazed courtyard, a term applied to many ruins in these parts) etc. The biggest of these mounds, Mangal-nāther dhāp, (Fig. 6) is situated close to the point, from which a road branches off to Bihar. It is said that terra-cotta plaques as well as stone images were found at this site, but were all consigned to the neighbouring *dīghi*.

Bihār and Bhāsu-Bihār

Following the road from Teghar and passing through Hukmāpur, where the road from Mahasthan meets it, and crossing the Nāgar river, we came to the village of Bihār, where there is a kātchāri of the Kundgram Chaudhuris of Bogra, who along with the Chaudhuris of Sibganj and the Khan Panis of Karatia are mutwalis of the Mahasthangarh shrine. Here, near the river bank, is a mound, where the monastery which has given its name to the village probably stood. There is a road from Bihār to Sikandrābād, which is being extended to Ghāgarduār on the Sibganj road.

About a mile north, are the ruins known as Bhāsu-Bihār, consisting of two extensive mounds close together ,with a smaller mound a little to their west. Cunningham, who visited the ruins in 1879. identified them as those of the *Po-shi-po* monastery and its neighbouring monuments described by Hiuen Tsang (*A.S.R.*, XV, p. 103). This will be discussed later.

Bhīmer Jāṅgāl

This well-known embankment starts from the north-east corner of Bogra town and proceeds northwards for about 30 miles to a marshy place called Dāmukdaher *bil*, under police station Govindaganj (Rangpur District), and, it is said, goes on to Ghoraghat. It is made of the red earth of the locality and retains at places even now a height of 20 feet above the level of the country.

There is a break in it of over three miles from Daulatpur (north west of Mahasthan-garh) to Hāzradīghi (south-west of it). About a mile south of Hāzradīghi, the stream Subil approaches the jāṅgāl and runs alongside it down to Bogra town.

Some people think that the Subil is a moat formed by digging the earth for the jāṅgāl, but as there is no embankment on the northern reach of the Subil (now called the Āto nālā, which merges in the Kālīdaha *bil*, north of Mahas-

than-garh), O'Donnell was probably right in saying that the Subil represents the western of the two branches into which the Karatoya divided above Mahasthan.

On the Bogra-Hazradīghi section of the jāṅgāl, there are two cross embankments running down to the Karatoya, about 2 miles and 4 miles respectively north of Bogra town, and there is a diagonal embankment connecting these cross bunds and then running along the Karatoya until it meets the main embankment near Bogra.

This jāṅgāl or embankment appears to have been of a military character, thrown up to protect the country on its east. The break near Mahasthan may be due to the embankment having been washed away or to the existence of natural protection by the *bil.*

The Bhīma to whom the embankment is ascribed may be the Kaivarta chief of the eleventh century, who, according to the *Rāmacharitam,* ruled over Varendra in succession to his father Rudraka and uncle Divyoka, who had ousted king Mahīpāla II of the Pāla dynasty. Bhīma in his turn was defeated in battle and killed by Rāmapāla, Mahipāla's son.

Govinda Dhāp

Higher up the Karatoyā and separated from the north-eastern corner of the garh by the road, stands this mound, which according to the *Karatoyā-māhātmyam* marks a limit of the sacred ground of Mahasthan. According to the *Gazetteer*, pp. 158-59, at the foot of the mound on its northern side and facing the river, there was a long stone wall submerged under water, which was examined in 1907 by making excavations all round it. It was then found that the wall was semicircular in shape, evidently built to protect the buildings on the mound from erosion by the Karatoya, and that there was a ghāt quite separate from it on the east side. The wall was some 150 feet long and 4 feet high. The wall and the ghāt were washed away by the North Bengal flood of 1922.

The river side below the mound was strewn over, before the flood, with blocks of stone, some of them beautifully carved, and it is still called Pātharghātā.

The recent excavation of the mound by the Archæological Department has revealed the remains of two terraced temples of considerable size and antiquity and at one spot a few coins of Ilyas Shah and Mahmud Shah, Pathan rulers of Bengal, in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Ghāgarduār

North of the garh, on the Sibganj road, is the village of Ghāgarduār, which contains a number of old tanks, but few mounds of note.

Chingāspur

North-west of the garh across the Kālidaha *bil*, and south-west of Ghāgarduār, is the large village of Chingāspur. Through its middle a road is being made running northwards through Sikandrābād to Ghāgardūar on the Sibganj road and southwards through Bāmanpārā and Saralpur to Chāndniā hāt on the Khetlal road. In the eastern part of Chingāspur village bordering on the Kalidaha *bil* are several mounds,—Dhaniker dhāp, Mādārigarh, Padmā-bāṭi and Vishamardan. (See *J.A.S.B.*, 1878 p. 94.)

Palibāri

West of Chingāspur is the small, low-lying village of Palibāri which contains a Vishṇu temple, of modern age.

Dhanmohani

West of Palibāri, stretching along the north boundary of Saralpur, is the village of Dhanmohani which is not known to contain any site of antiquarian interest. The Mahasthan-Bihar road passes through it.

Sachiāni, Jath-Ponaratikā and Daulatpur

The north-east corner of Dhanmohani is occupied by a *bil*. North of this *bil*, near the southern boundary of Daulatpur village, begins the northern section of Bhīmer Jāṅgāl, which meeting the Nāgar river between Bhāsu-Bihār and Sabdaldīghi, runs northwards along its eastern bank.

Between the jāṅgāl and the river lie the villages of Sachiāni and Jāth-Ponaratikā, which are not known to contain any remarkable ruins. On the east side of the jāṅgāl is a long strip of the village Daulatpur, of which another section lies north of Sikandrābād. The Sikandrābād-Bihar road passes through Sachiāni.

Syāmpur

East of Daulatpur is the small village of Syampur which contains a big old tank called 'Do-satina Pukur,' south-east of which stands a big mound called Yoginī Dhāp.

Sikandrābād

North of Syāmpur, stretching from Sabdaldīghi to Ghāgarduar, is the village of Sikandrābād which contains several tanks and a walled mound called Prāchir and other mounds, called Kājīr-hāri, Suradīghir dhāp etc. There is a road to it from Bihar, which is being extended eastwards to Ghāgarduār, with a branch going south to Bāmanpārā.

Daulatpur, Hazrā-bāṭi and Sabdal-dīghi

To the north of Sikandrabad are the villages of Daulatpur (north section) and Hāzra-bāṭi, both of which are full of old tanks and mounds. A mound in the former village is called Khojār dhāp, close to which is the Sabdal-dīghi, a huge tank after which the village is named.

II. DISCUSSION.

Now let us discuss the literary and historical evidence bearing on Mahasthan and the question of its identity with the ancient city of Pauṇḍravarddhana.

Mention of Paundravarddhana in Literature

This name occurs in the ancient literature of North India as well as in several ancient inscriptions of Bengal.

In the Jaina work *Kalpasūtra* (*vide Viśvakosha,* under 'Puṇḍra-varddhana') Godāsa, a disciple of Bhadrabāhu, the reputed spiritual guide of the Maurya Emperor Chandragupta, is said to have classified the Jainas of Eastern India into four classes, one of which was called 'Pauṇḍravarddhanīyā.'

The name frequently occurs in Buddhist literature. In the story of 'Sumagadhāvadāna' in the *Avadāna-kalpalatā* of Kshemendra (11th century A.D., *vide* Sāhitya-Parishat edition, ch. 93) it is related how Buddha travelled from Jetavana to Pauṇḍravarddhana-nagara. In the story of 'Koṭikārṇāvadāna' in the *Divyāvadāna* (Ed. by Cowell and Neil, p. 21) Pauṇḍravarddhana is described as situated in the east.

The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who during his stay in India from 639 to 645 A.D. visited Pauṇḍravarddhana, has left a record of his observations on which Cunningham (*A.S.R.*, XV, p. 112) comments as follows :—

'He (Hiuen Tsang) simply notes that there were about twenty Buddhist monasteries containing some 3000 monks, who studied the Hinayāna, or the lesser means of advancement, and about one hundred Brahmanical temples ; but the greater number of the heretics were Nirgranthas who went about naked.

'In my description of the ruins I have already noticed the traces of the Brahmanical worship of Vishṇu and Śiva, and to these I may add a temple of Kārtikeya, which Jayāpīḍa is said to have visited on his arrival at Pauṇḍravarddhana. The pilgrim mentions no king, and his silence on this point may be taken as evidence that Varendra was in this time one of the dependent provinces of the vast dominions of Harsha Varddhana of Kanauj. The king of the neighbouring country of Kāmarūpa, or Assam, named Bhāskara Varmmā, is duly noticed, but as he was certainly tributary to Harsha Varddhana, I conclude that the intervening province of Varendra had been annexed to the kingdom of Kanauj.'

Regarding the last conclusion of Cunningham's, it may be mentioned here that from Hiuen Tsang's own observations (Beal's life of Hiuen Tsang, p. 188) and the Nidhanpur Copper-plates of Bhaskaravarman (*Ep. Ind.*, XII, p. 73, XIX, p. 115,) which are purported to have been issued from Karnasuvarna,

which Bhaskaravarman had wrested from Śaśānka, it is more probable that 'Varendra' was annexed to the kingdom of Kāmarūpa at this time.

Pauṇḍravarddhana is referred to thus in a picture in a manuscript of the Pala period now in the Cambridge University library : *Puṇḍavardhane Trisaraṇa-Buddha-Bhaṭṭarakaḥ dvitīya-ārishasthāna*, Foucher, *Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde*, Paris, 1900, p. 190 and Pl. III fig. 4.§ The name occurs in Sanskrit works, *e.g.* the *Devi bhāgavata*, the *Padma*, *Matsya*, *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Mārkaṇḍeya Purānas* and the *Jñānārnava Tantra*. In the lexicon of Purushottama (11th century) (*vide* "Trikāṇḍāśesha," p. 9, *Abhidhāna-saṁgraha*, Nirnaya-sagar Press), we have : *Pundrāh syur-Varendrī Gauda nivṛiti*, that is, 'the Punḍras are Varendrī and Gauḍa countries.' The name occurs in the *Rājatarangiṇī* and the *Rāmacharitam*, both works of the 11th century, which will be referred to again.

Mention in Inscriptions

In the Sāngli copper-plates (dated 855 Śaka year) of the Rāshṭrakūṭa king Govinda Suvarna-varsha, Paunḍravarddhana-nagara is mentioned as the place from which the donee, Keśava Dikshita is said to have come (*Ind. Ant.*, XII, p. 251 or 254).

Naturally, it is in the inscriptions of Bengal that the name frequently occurs. The recently found Paharpur copperplate (478-79 A.D.) is purported to have been issued from Punḍravarddhana city itself, but elsewhere the term occurs as the name of a *bhukti* or province, which appears to have been a vast one, embracing the three present divisions of Rajshahi, Presidency and Dacca, and divided, so far as can be gathered from the Gupta, Pāla and Sena inscriptions, into at least five *manḍalas* or *vishayas*, viz. :—

(1) Vyāghrataṭī manḍala in the Khalimpur grant of Dharmmapāla, the Nālandā grant of Devapāla and the Ānuliā grant of Lakshmaṇasena.

(2) Khāḍī manḍala in the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena and the Sundarban grant of Lakshmaṇasena.

(3) The Koṭivarsha vishaya in the Damodarpur grants of Kumaragupta I (443 A.D.), Budhagupta (533 A.D.) and a later Gupta king (543 A.D.) and the Bangarh grant of Mahipāla, the Āmgāchi grant of Vigrahapāla III and the Manahali grant of Madanapāla.

(4) Varendrī in the Silimpur stone inscription of Prahāsa, and the Tarpandīghi and Mādhāinagar grants of Lakshmaṇasena ; and

(5) Vanga in the grants of Keśavasena and Viśvarūpasena.

§ I owe this reference to Mr. Nanigopal Majumdar.

Paundravarddhana-pura as Mahasthan

The inscriptions give no indication of the exact spot in this wide area where the capital city was situated. But literary evidence points to its having been situated in Varendrī, for instance, verse 1 of the 'kavi-praśasti' in the *Rāma-charitam* of Sandhyākar Nandī (contemporary of king Kumārapāla, 11th century) says :

Vasudhā-śiro Varendrī-maṇḍala chūḍāmaṇiḥ kulasthānam |
ŚrīPauṇḍravarddhanapura-pratibaddha-punyabhuḥ bṛihadbaṭuḥ ||

that is, 'Varendrī is the foremost place of the earth and Pauṇḍravarddhana-pura is its crest-jewel.' Again, according to the *Rājataraṅginī* of Kalhana (11th century), Pauṇḍravarddhana-pura was the residence of king Jayanta of Gauḍa when Jayāpīḍa, king of Kashmir (in the 8th century), visited it.

For some centuries after the eleventh, during which the place ceased to be the capital and was probably deserted, we hear no more of it till it emerges as a sacred place of the Hindus, with the name of Mahāsthān.

The authority for this revival as a sacred place are the following verses of the *Karatoyā-māhātmyam* (a work probably not of a later date than the 15th century, *vide* Ap. 1) :—

(Verse 16) In Koṭi-śilā-dvīpa, in Pauṇḍra . . . .

(V. 17) Paraśurāma, the son of Bhṛigu caused the land between the temples of Skanda and Govinda to be reclaimed in a period of three days. It was wonderful, a golden creation.

(V. 24) I bow my head to Śrī-Pauṇḍravarddhana-pura, which is the foremost place on the earth, being sanctified by the water of the Karatoya and inhabited by one and a quarter *lakh* of Brahmins and Skanda, Vishnu, Balabhadra, Śiva and other gods.

(V. 53) A merit is multiplied a *koti* times at Pauṇḍranagara. Here the feeding of a single Brāhmaṇa yields the merit of the performance of all the sacrifices.

(V. 57) The holy land is five *kos* in circuit, in which again, a circuit of one *kos* encloses the most secret spot, where Bhārgava resides.

(Verses 58 and 59) Rāma created this spot, which became the Mahāsthāna of the whole world, on account of its nineteen specialities, viz., (1) Bhārgava Muni resides there ; (2) Guha (i.e. Kartikeya) imparts knowledge to animals ; (3) it is full of dīghis (?) ; (4) of gold ; (5) of sweet scent ; (6) Sticks grow bigger ; (7) bone turns into stone ; (8) snakes do not raise their hoods ; (9) the breath is equal in the two nostrils ; (10) it has wonderful wells ; (11) islands ; (12) and

showers of gold; (13) its ground is elevated; (14) a bath in the Kāmya kuṇḍa rejuvenates men; (15) it is a place of enjoyment; (16) of yajña or worship; (17) of wandering; (18) and of dancing, and (19) here men's utterances are as the Vedas.

It was probably after this rehabilitation that the ancient name of Pauṇḍra-varddhana-pura was entirely superseded and the place came to be known as Mahāsthan, to be resorted to for a bath (in the Karatoya) by thousands of Hindus when the Pausha-Nārāyaṇī yoga occurs.

It is significant that the authorship of this work—as well as of the reclamation of Mahasthan, is ascribed to a Paraśurāma, which is also the name of the Hindu king who, according to the current legend, was overthrown by the Muslim saint Shah Sultan.

Muslim Occupation of Mahāsthān

The next vicissitude in the fortunes of Mahasthan, *viz.*, the establishment there of Muslim predominance attended with the legend of Shah Sultan and Śilādevī, appears to be an event of the second half of the seventeenth century, though all the Muslim coins found there relate to the Pathan rulers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This inference is drawn from the *sanad* of 1685, the record of the acquisition of the Selbarsa zamindari by a Muslim landlord, the version of the advent of Shah Sultan in the Bengali ballad named *Sultan Balkhi*, the inscription on the mosque at Mahasthan, and the probable age of the Sanskrit inscriptions on the door-jambs of the shrine at Mahasthan.

The *sanad* (Ap. II) tells us that at its date, *viz.* 1685 A.D., Syed Muhammad Tahir with two others was in possession of the *pirpal* of Mahasthan, from some time before. It was also about this time (*i.e.* 1076 H. or 1664 A.D.) that the great Selbarsa zamindari in which Mahasthan is situated passed from a Hindu landlord, Dunichand Khatri (whose headquarters were at Kundgram, 3 miles south-west of Talora Railway Station) to a Muslim land-lord Syed Ahmad, one of whose wives Duni Syedni was the daughter of Syed Muhammad Tahir. On Syed Ahmad's death in 1700 A.D., Muhammad Tahir's son Abu Turab, who had meanwhile succeeded his father in the *pirpal* of Mahasthan, was given the Taraf Bihar portion of the Selbarsa zamindari, through the intervention of his sister Duni Syedni.

It was after this that the mosque was erected, for the inscription on it gives its date as the seventh year of Farrukh Siyar's reign, that is A.D. 1718.

Then we have the ballad of *Sultan Balkhi* or 'the Saint from Balkh', which is said to be a Bengali version of a Persian poem rendered by Abdul Majid Khond-

kar and published by Ghulam Maola from the Habibi press first in 1288 B.S. (1881 A.D.) and again in 1303 B.S. It relates how Shah Sultan, who bore the curious title of Māhi-sawar or 'rider of a fish,' came from Balkh in Central Asia to the court of Nawab Shaista Khan at Hisya Sandvipa and from there to Mahasthan for spreading Islam, riding on a fish. It is further related that when (as noted before) his prayer-skin began to expand miraculously, the affrighted king of Mahasthan, Parasurama called to his aid the Rājā of Birāt, Rājā Balarām of Hāṇḍiāl, the Rājā of Gokul, Rājā Rāmakṛishna, Manrājā, and Rāmdayāl Gosvāmī, but to no avail.

Whatever may be said of the authenticity of these potentates, the ballad appears to give the correct date of the advent of Shah Sultan at Mahasthan and the establishment there of Muslim predominance, for Shaista Khan was Governor of Bengal from 1664 to 1689 the period during which the *sanad* of 1685 was issued and the Selbarsa zamindari passed from a Hindu to a Muslim landlord (1664), and prior to which is the probable date of the 'Narasiṁhadāsasya' inscriptions on the door-jambs of the shrine.

The Hisya Sandvipa mentioned above is probably the island of Sandvipa, south of Noakhali, which Shaista Khan made the base of his naval operations against the Magh pirates.

Corrupt form of the Name

The *sanad* of 1685, which is preserved in the record room at Bogra, was published by Mr. Beveridge in 1878 (*vide* Appendix II). In it the words 'astanah' and 'roza' are used indiscriminately to mean the shrine. The former suggested to Mr. Beveridge 'the idea that Mahasthan may after all be a Muhammadan name meaning the 'Great Astan.'' He adds 'The Hindu name perhaps was Śiladwip.' Siladvip was, and, according to the *mantra* for the bath, even now is, the name of the sacred bathing place, though corrupted into 'Śilādevī' in common parlance. But *mahasthan* also is a Sanskrit word cf. *ashṭa-mahāsthāna sailagandhakuṭim*, in the Sarnath inscription of Mahīpāla (*Gauḍa--Lekhamālā*, p. 108) or *mahasthan Satgaon* in the *Kavi-kankan Chaṇḍī*, 1557A.D. (Indian Press edition, p. 122). It was applied to this place for its reputed nineteen specialities (Ap. I, v. 59). Moreover, 'mahā' nowhere means 'great' in Persian, and in the *sanad* itself as transcribed by Mr. Beveridge the name is clearly 'Mastangarh' evidently a corrupt form of the Sanskrit name.

The identity of Mahasthan with Paundravarddhana-pura

This identification is due to Cunningham, whose chief authority is the Chinese

pilgrim Hiuen Tsang's *Travels* in which Pauṇḍravarddhana is referred to as follows :—

'Going from this country (*Kie-chu-hoh-khi-lo*, i.e. Kajangala) eastward and crossing the Ganges after about 600 li, we come to the kingdom of Pun-na-fa-ta-na (Pauṇḍravarddhana). This country is about 4000 li in circuit. Its capital is about 30 li (=5 miles) round. The *Panasa* fruit though plentiful is highly esteemed. To the west of the capital, 20 li or so, is the Po-shi-po Sanghārāma. Not far from this is a stupa built by Aśoka on the site where Buddha had explained his law to the Devas. By the side of this again is a place where the four past Buddhas had walked for exercise and sat down. Not far from this is a Vihāra in which is a statue of Kwan-toz-tsai Bodhisattva. From this going east 900 li or so crossing a great river we come to the country of Kia-mo-lu-po (Kāmarūpa).'

Cunningham identifies *Kie-chu-hoh-khi-lo* with modern Kankjole, 16 miles south of Rajmahal and about the same distance south-west of the Ganges (*A.S.R.*, XV, pp. 37-38). About the other places he observes (*ibid*, p. 110), 'In my account of Bhāsu Bihār, 4 miles to the west of Mahāsthan, I mentioned that the Buddhist remains at that place corresponded both in description and position with those noted by Hiuen Tsang at the *Po-shi-po* monastery, which was situated just 4 miles to the west of the capital city of Pauṇḍravarddhana. This city the pilgrim places at 600 li, or 100 miles to the east of the Ganges, near Rajmahal. Now this description corresponds exactly with the relative positions of Rajmahal and Mahasthan, the latter being just 100 miles to the east of the former. The natives of the country are unanimous in their opinion that Mahāsthan was the ancient capital of Varendra or Eastern Gauḍa.'

He adds (p. 111), 'The earliest mention that I have found of the city of Paundravarddhana refers to the end of the eighth century A.D., when Jayāpīḍa Rājā of Kashmir (A.D. 779 to 813) visited Gauḍa. At that time the king of Paundravarddhana was named Jayanta, but there were no less than five other 'Kings of Gauḍa' whom Jayāpiḍa is said to have conquered. Now this is exactly the state of the country which is described by Taranath immediately preceding the establishment of the Pāla dynasty, Vassilief's *Taranath*, translated by La Comme, p. 54, note.'

Mahasthan fits in with the position of Kāmarūpa as noted by Hiuen Tsang, the latter place being some 150 miles north-east across a great river, which may be either the Karatoya or the Brahmaputra. It also fits in with the account of Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar's ill-fated expedition to Tibet in the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirî*.

The temple of Kārtikeya, which Jayāpīḍa is said to have visited, may be identified with the Skanda mound, south-east of Mahasthangarh (Cunningham, *A.S.R.*, XV, p. 112), while the other monuments noticed by Hiuen Tsang, *viz.*, the *Po-shi-po* monastery, the stupa of Aśoka on the site where Buddha preached, the monument on the site where the last four Buddhas took exercise and rested, and the temple of Avalokiteśvara, may be identified with one or other of the mounds at or near Bhāsu-Bihār (cf. Cunningham, *A.S.R.*, XV, p. 103).

Indeed, as a glance at the map will show, the ruins at and around Mahasthan are so numerous and significant and so much evidence of the antiquity and lost prosperity of this area has come to light in the shape of coins, images and literary references, that there can be little doubt that they mark the site of ancient Paunḍravarddhana-pura. The only notable site which contests this claim is Pandua near Gaur, of which the name was once taken to be an abbreviation of Paunḍravarddhana. But this claim is untenable, as the coins of Danuja-mardana-deva (Kans or Ganeśa) and his son Mahendradeva (Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah,) found near Pandua show the mint-town as Pānḍu-nagara, which has evidently been abbreviated into Pānḍua (Bhattasali, *Independent Sultans of Bengal*, p. 117). Further, from the Khālimpur grant of Dharmmapāla and the Ānulia grant of Lakshmaṇasena, Pānḍua as well as Gaur seems to fall within the Vyāghrataṭīmanḍala; also very few antiquities of the pre-Muslim period and none whatsoever of the Gupta period have come to light in this tract.

It is therefore a welcome move of the Archæological Department to have commenced the exploration of Mahasthan, and though one season's operations have revealed nothing of a startling or definite character, enough has come to light to indicate that the exploration, if persevered in, is sure to unravel the mystery of the vast and numerous ruins of Mahasthan, and light up a dark chapter of North Bengal history.

PRABHAS CHANDRA SEN.

APPENDIX I.

The Karatoya-mahatmyam

This work which is said to be included in a larger work the *Uttara-Pauṇḍra-khaṇḍa,* was first published in 1298 B.S. (1891 A.D.) with a Bengali translation, by Pandit Rajachandra Nyayapanchanan. It consists of two parts: verses 1 to 60, *Paundra-kshetra-māhātmyam* and verses 61 to 85, *Karatoyā-māhātmyam.* The text is printed here from that edition.

Verse 41 of this work is quoted in Sarvānanda's *Tikā sarvasva* (1159 A. D.) in the *tikā* of sloka 32 in vārivarga; verses 41 and 63, in the *Smriti-chandrikā* of Devanabhaṭṭa who is quoted by Hemādri (12th century); verse 41, in the *Vyākhyāsudhā* of Bhanuji Dikshit son of Bhattoji Dikshit; verse 63, in the *Smritiratnakar* of Vedāchārya who quotes Bhavadeva and Jimutavahana and is quoted by Raghunandana.§ Verse 63 is quoted in the *Tithi-viveka* of Sulapāni (first quarter of the 15th century); verses 30 and 37 in the *Kṛitya-chintāmani* of Vāchaspati Miśra of Mithila (second half of 15th century) and verses 33 and 63 in the Amāvasyā-prakaraṇa of the *Tithitattva* of Raghunandana (first half of 16th century).

अथ करतोया माहात्म्यं ॥ श्रीपार्व्वत्युवाच ।

अपरं कथ्यतां देव नदीनाञ्च विशेषतः। पौण्ड्रक्षेत्रस्य माहात्म्यं न श्रुतं विस्तरात् प्रभो ॥ १ ।

कदोत्पत्तिः कथं तस्याः कस्माच्चैव विशेषतः। श्रोतुमिच्छामि भूतेश यदि स्यान्मय्यनुग्रहः ॥ २ ।

केन प्रकाशिता सा च नदी करजला भुवि। कथं वा प्लावितं क्षेत्रं शुभं पौण्ड्रमनुत्तमम् ॥ ३ ।

ईश्वर उवाच।

पाणिग्रहणकाले ते देवि हिमवता जलं। संप्रदत्तं मत्कराच्च निर्गतं करजा भुवि ॥ ४ ।

पुरैव कथितं सर्व्वं पौण्ड्रस्य च सुरेश्वरि। तत्रैव कथितं तुभ्यं करतोयाफलं यथा ॥ ५ ।

अधुनापि यथा तासां नदीनाञ्च विशेषतः। कलिपापहरा पुण्या भार्गवेन प्रकाशिता ॥ ६ ।

मत्पुत्रोपि गुहस्तत्र तिष्ठत्येव हि सर्व्वदा। यत्रास्ते भगवान् विष्णुर्गरुड़ासन ईश्वरः ॥ ७ ।

सर्व्वदा सर्व्वभावेन पौण्ड्रे नारायणो हरिः। पुष्करं न त्यजेत् ब्रह्मा नाहं वाराणसीं त्यजे ॥ ८ ।

श्रीपौण्ड्रवर्द्धनं क्षेत्रं नैव मुञ्चति केशवः। धरित्र्या नाभिकमलं पूतं करजलैर्म्मम ॥ ९ ।

सूत उवाच।

शृणुध्वं मुनयः सर्व्वं यदुक्तं भार्गवेन वै। श्रुत्वा शङ्करतो वाक्यं संवादमुभयोरपि ॥१०।

पुत्त्रवात्सल्यभावेन भार्गवाय प्रकाशितं। स एव भार्गवः श्रीमानृषिभ्योऽप्यप्रकाशयत् ॥ ११ ।

नमस्तस्मै मुनीन्द्राय दानवेन्द्रनिषूदिने। श्रीचक्रपाणये तुभ्यं ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवात्मने ॥ १२ ।

§ For the above information I am indebted to Mr. Subodh Chandra Banerji M. A. of the Dacca University Manuscript Library which is in possession of manuscripts of the *Karatoya-mahatmyam* and the other works referred to. No copy of the *Uttara-Paundra-khnda* has come to light yet.

एकः परशुमात्रेण निहत्य क्षत्रियान् युधि। चक्रे निःक्षत्रियां पृथ्वीमेकविंशतिवारतः ॥ १३।
ततः परशुरामेति पृथिव्यां ख्यातविक्रमः। जामदग्न्यो महावीर्य्यस्त्रेताद्ये यस्य संस्थितिः ॥ १४।
सर्व्वज्ञः सुव्रतः शुद्धः सर्व्वाचारविधायकः। कौतुकाकृष्टहृदयः पृथिव्यां परमो हरिः ॥ १५।
पौण्ड्रे कोटिशिलाद्वीपे महापुण्ये सुविश्रुते। करतोयासरित्तीरे शरीराद्यन्तपावनं।
भक्तिमुक्तिफलार्थाय येनाकारि द्विजार्पणं ॥ १६।
अद्भुता कारिता सृष्टिः कनकस्य दिनत्रयं। स्कन्दगोविन्दयोर्म्मध्ये भूमिः संस्कृतवेदिका ॥ १७।
वेदीमध्योत्तरे पार्श्वे देवी कालञ्जरी स्थिता। तद्दक्षिणेऽर्पिता देवी कोटीश्वरीति विश्रुता ॥ १८।
नैर्ऋते लिङ्गकोट्यश्च वसन्ति भृगुणार्पिताः। वारुणे विजया चण्डी उत्तरे भूतिकेश्वरः ॥ १९।
तत्कुण्डे सुतिथौ स्नात्वा नरः पापात् प्रमुच्यते। भूतिकेश्वरदेवस्य दक्षिणे सूर्य्यमण्डपं ॥ २०।
वेदीमध्ये ऽर्पितो यूपः संश्लेषाद् वर्द्धते नृणां। गोविन्दमण्डपात् पूर्व्वे कुण्डं विष्णुविनिर्म्मितं ॥२१।
स्कन्दमण्डपवायव्ये सभा रामस्य चाद्भुता। सपादलक्षं विप्राणां यत्रास्तेऽद्भुतकर्म्मणां ॥२२।
प्रभावात्तपसो देवि मुनीन्द्रस्य महात्मनः। तत्सभा वायुकोणे च गर्त्तमीश्वर-निर्म्मितं ॥ २३।
आद्यं भुवो भवनं लक्षसपादविप्रैः स्कन्दादिविष्णुबलभद्रशिवादिदेवैः।
अध्यासितं करजलाम्बुविधूतपापं श्रीपौण्ड्रवर्द्धनपुरं शिरसा नमामि ॥ २४।
करजापश्चिमे भागे सदा वहति जाह्नवी। पूर्व्वभागे तु करजा पादोना जाह्नवी जला ॥ २५।
करतोयापश्चिमे तीरे लोहिनी यत्र मृत्तिका। मुक्तिक्षेत्रं समाख्यातं महापातकनाशनं ॥ २६।
करतोयानदीं प्राप्य त्रिरात्रोपोषितो नरः। अश्वमेधमवाप्नोति शक्रलोकञ्च गच्छति।
अत्रैव ज्ञानमासाद्य हरिसायुज्यमाप्नुयात् ॥ २७।
करतोयां समासाद्य ये त्यजन्ति कलेवरं। तेषां मुक्तिर्न सन्देहो यावदिन्द्राश्चतुर्द्दश ॥ २८।
न मानुषास्ते ते देवा नदीस्तिस्रः पिबन्ति ये। देविकां करतोयाञ्च विपाशां पापनाशिनीं ॥ २९।
स्कन्दगोविन्दयोर्मध्ये सोमवारे कुहूतिथौ। प्रातर्म्मौनेन यः स्नायात् कुलकोटीः समुद्धरेत् ॥ ३०।
कियन्तो रेणवः पृथ्व्यां कियानाकाशसम्भवः। माहात्म्यं करतोयाया वक्तुं नैव हि शक्यते ॥ ३१।
पुरुषोत्तमे महाज्यैष्ठीसमये दर्शनात् फलं। करतोयाम्भसि स्नात्वा यत्तत् फलमवाप्नुयात् ॥ ३२।
करतोयाजलं प्राप्य यदि सोमयुता कुहूः। अरुणोदयवेलायां सूर्य्यग्रहशतैः समा ॥ ३३।
शिलाद्वीपं समासाद्य तच्च कोटिगुणं भवेत्। तदेव कोटिगुणितं पौषार्के च यदैव सा ॥ ३४।
वाराणस्यां कुरुक्षेत्रे यत्पुण्यं राहुदर्शने। शिलाद्वीपं समासाद्य तच्च कोटिगुणं भवेत् ॥ ३५।
पौषे वा माघमासे वा यदि सोमयुता कुहूः। व्यतिपातेन योगेन कोटिकोटिगुणं भवेत् ॥ ३६।
चापार्के मूलसंयुक्ते यदि सोमयुता कुहूः। नारायणीति विख्याता त्रिकोटिकुलमुद्धरेत् ॥ ३७।
वाराणस्यां कृता पूजा सम्पूर्णफलदायिनी। ततोऽपि द्विगुणा प्रोक्ता करतोयानदीजले ॥ ३८।
द्वारावत्याञ्च गण्डक्यां प्रयागे पुष्करे तथा। बदर्य्याख्ये कुरुक्षेत्रे या पूजा फलदायिनी।
ततश्चतुर्गुणा प्रोक्ता करतोयानदीजले ॥ ३९।

करतोयाजले देवि विष्णुपूजा विशेषतः। ततोऽपि फलबाहुल्यं शिवशक्त्योः प्रपूजनात् ॥ ४० ।
आदौ कर्कटके देवि त्र्यहं गङ्गा रजस्वला। सर्व्वा रक्तवहा नद्यः करतोयाम्बुवाहिनी ॥ ४१ ।
इयं श्रीसुन्दरी देवि सदानीरवहा स्मृता। ये कुर्व्वन्ति सदा स्नानं तर्पयन्ति च ये सदा।
किं बहूक्तेन देवेशि मुक्तिस्तेषां करे स्थिता ॥ ४२ ।
अहो जलस्य माहात्म्यं ममैव करसम्भवं। नृणां पापहरं पुण्यं स्नानपानाच्च मुक्तिदं ॥ ४३ ।
करतोयानदीतीरे वासो वा क्रियते यदि। वाराणसीसमो वासः पातकान्मुच्यते नरः ॥ ४४ ।
करजायास्तीरे देवपूजा सर्व्वार्थसाधिका। अन्यत्र पूजनाद्देवि सन्देहो नास्ति सुन्दरि ॥ ४५ ।
कारतोयेन तोयेन उदरस्थेन ये मृताः। तेषां मुक्ति र्न सन्देहो यावदिन्द्राश्चतुर्द्दश।
तत्रैव ज्ञान मासाद्य मुक्तिः स्यात् केवलाऽमला ॥ ४६ ।
गङ्गायाः करजायाश्च जलमत्रेति सुन्दरि। सर्व्वपापहरं पुण्यं भुवि पावनमुत्तमम् ॥ ४७ ।
अस्थिकेशादयो यस्य करजायां तपोधने। पतन्ति तस्य स्वर्गः स्याद् यावदिन्द्राश्चतुर्द्दश ॥ ४८ ।
करतोयापश्चिमे तीरे सदा वहति जाह्नवी। विशेषो लोहिनी यत्र मृत्तिका मुक्तिदायिनी ॥ ४९ ।
करतोयापश्चिमे तीरे लोहिनी यत्र मृत्तिका। मुक्तिक्षेत्रं समाख्यातं महापातकनाशनं ॥ ५० ।
करतोयाजलं पुण्यं पावनं भुवि दुर्लभं। सम्पूर्णमाघमासन्तु स्नात्वा विष्णुपुरं व्रजेत् ॥ ५१ ।
करतोयानदीतीरे देवपूजापरायणः। विप्रभोजनमात्रेण ह्यश्वमेधफलं लभेत् ॥ ५२ ।
विशेषः पौण्ड्रनगरे कोटिकोटिगुणं भवेत्। विप्रैकभोजनादेव सर्व्वयज्ञफलं लभेत् ॥ ५३ ।
जपहोमैस्तथा दानपूजाश्राद्धक्रियादिभिः। कोटिकोटिगुणं तत्र पौण्ड्रक्षेत्रे च सुन्दरि ॥ ५४ ।
करतोयामृदा ये च तिलकं धारयन्ति वै। विष्णुरूपधराः पापान्मुच्यन्ति नात्र संशयः ॥ ५५ ।
स्कन्दगोविन्दयोर्म्मध्ये गुप्ता वाराणसी पुरी। तत्रारोहणमात्रेण नरो नारायणो भवेत् ॥ ५६ ।
पञ्चक्रोशमिदं क्षेत्रं समन्तात् परिकीर्त्तितं। तदन्तर्गतमेतत्तु क्रोशमात्रं महेश्वरि।
अतिगुह्यतमं क्षेत्रं यत्रास्ते भार्गवो मुनिः ॥ ५७ ।
पद्मो ज्ञानं कथयति गुहस्तद्गृहे ताम्रचूड़ो दैर्घ्यै हैमो घटितसुरभिर्यष्टिवृद्धिः शिलास्थिः। क्षेत्रुच्छत्रं
न फणति फणी हिस्वरो जीवलोकः कूपो द्वीपः कनकपतनं पौण्ड्रक्षेत्रेऽद्भुतानि ॥ ५८ ।
प्रोच्चा भूमिर्भवति तरुणः स्नानतः काम्यकुण्डे भोगी यज्ञो भ्रमणनटनं तत्र वाक्यं हि वेदः।
इत्थं रामो रचयति पदं लक्षणान्यूनविंशान्यस्मात् ख्यातं सकलजगतां श्रीमहास्थानमेतत् ॥ ५९ ।
स्नानाद् यत्र निहन्ति पापनिचयं श्रीपार्व्वतीतोया नदी यस्यां संस्थितमानुषास्थि सकलं प्राप्नोति
पाषाणतां। देवस्तारकमारकोऽपि नितरां ज्ञानं ददात्यद्भूतं कौपं यत् पय एव
तैलविपुलं पौण्ड्रं पुरः पातु वः ॥ ६० ।
॥ इत्युत्तरपौण्ड्रखण्डे पौण्ड्रक्षेत्रमाहात्म्यं ॥

सूतउवाच ।

शृणुध्वं मुनयः सर्व्वे माहात्म्यं तज्जलस्यच । बाहुदायाश्च तीरेऽस्मिन् जलं सर्व्वमलापहं ॥ ६१ ।
गङ्गा वा करतोया वा विशेषा नात्र विद्यते । हरमूर्द्धि स्थिता गङ्गा साऽपरा करनिर्गता ॥ ६२ ।
करतोये सदानीरे सरिच्छ्रेष्ठे सुविश्रुते । पौण्ड्रान् प्लावयसे नित्यं पापं हर करोद्भवे ॥
मन्त्रेणानेन वै स्नायात् करतोयाजले शुभे ॥ ६३ ।
तत्तुल्यरूपास्ति नदी न काचिद्रजोविहीना तरुणी यतोऽसि धन्यासि पुण्यासि सरिद्वरासि
श्रीकण्ठपाणिप्रभवे नमस्ते ॥ ६४ ।
स्नानादियं करजला दुरितानि हन्ति ज्ञानं ददाति भगवानिह तारकारिः ॥ ६५ ।
बाहुदा बाहुदानाच्च लिखितस्य मुनेः पुरा । सदानीरा महापुण्या शीतवाहिनिका शुभा ॥ ६६ ।
ऋषयो मुनयश्चैव मार्कण्डेयो महामुनिः । अश्वत्थामा कपिवरो वासुदेवः स्वयं विभुः ॥ ६७ ।
चतुर्मुखः पञ्चमुखः करिमुखश्च षण्मुखः । सर्व्वे ते पश्चिमे भागे करतोयासरित्तटे ॥ ६८ ।
तिष्ठन्ति तपसो हेतोः सदानीराजलार्थिनः । रजोहीना महापुण्या विशेषः सिंहभास्करे ॥ ६९ ।
करतोयासरिन्नीरप्राप्तिमात्रेण सुन्दरि । स्नानतर्पणमावश्यं तदापारं विधीयते ॥ ७० ।
अस्नात्वा गच्छतः पारं पूर्व्वधर्म्मक्षयो भवेत् । स्नात्वा पीत्वा तथा नीरं पारावारे न दूषयेत् ॥ ७१ ।
पौण्ड्रक्षेत्रं महापुण्यं प्लावितं करसम्भवैः । तज्जलस्नानमात्रेण विष्णुप्रीतिविवर्द्धनं ॥ ७२ ।
पौण्ड्रक्षेत्रादुत्तरेच योजनद्वयमन्तरा । तत्रास्ते चण्डिका देवी लोहिनी यत्र मृत्तिका ॥ ७३ ।
तद्वारे प्रार्थनामात्रात् तुरगान् भवनानि च । ददाति चण्डिका देवी करतोयासरित्तटे ॥
अहो क्षेत्रस्य माहात्म्याद् ब्रह्महत्यां व्यपोहति ॥ ७४ ।
चाण्डालान्त्यजसंस्पृष्टं तीर्थतोयं न पावनं । विहाय करजागङ्गानर्म्मदायमुनाजलं ॥ ७५ ।
भाण्डानीतजलेनापि स्नानं कुर्व्वन्ति ये नराः । पापौघानविशेषेण मुच्यन्ति नात्र संशयः ॥ ७६ ।
करतोयाजले ज्ञानाज्ञानतः स्नाति यो नरः । ब्रह्मलोकमवाप्नोति दिनपापान् विनश्य वै ॥ ७७ ।
अज्ञानेनापि करजाजलं ये मनुजाः सकृत् । दुर्व्वृत्ताः पापरहिता प्रपिबन्ति भवन्ति ते ॥ ७८ ।
अत्रैव पौण्ड्रनगरे पुरुषार्थसिद्धिर्व्वाराणसी व्यसनमेव परं नराणां । तत्रैव विष्णुनिलयं सकलञ्च
यज्ञो ज्ञानं समाधिविविधं जपसाध्यसिद्धिः ॥ ७९ ।
कृष्णवेणी ताम्रपर्णी सरयूर्गण्डकी तथा । विष्णुपादोद्भवा पुण्या यमुना च सरस्वती ॥ ८० ।
कावेरी कौशिकी चन्द्रभागाच चिरवल्लभी । स्वर्णा चम्पा वेत्रवती तथात्रेयी पुनर्भवा ॥ ८१ ।
विपापाच विपाशाच चित्रा चित्रोत्पला तथा । गोमती गोमुखी रेवा तथा चिरसरस्वती ॥ ८२ ।
पृथ्व्यां वसन्त्यः सरितः सर्व्वास्तोयचयाः प्रिये । आसां नदीनाञ्च जलं सदैव च कराम्भसि ॥ ८३ ।
पौण्ड्रद्वीपे पठित्वेमं श्रीवीरो भार्गवोमुनिः । पौण्ड्रान् प्रदक्षिणीकृत्य मुच्यते ब्रह्महत्यया ॥ ८४ ।
करतोयामहातीर्थमाहात्म्यं यः पठेच्छुचिः । त्रिसन्ध्यमेकसन्ध्यं वा शृणुयाद्वापि यो नरः ।
तस्येह भोगान् सकलान् भुक्त्वा तद्गतमानसः । प्रेत्य याति परं स्थानं सर्व्वामलनिवारणं ॥ ८५ ।
इत्युत्तरपौण्ड्रखण्डे सूतशौनकसंवादे परशुरामविरचितं करतोयामाहात्म्यं समाप्तं ॥

APPENDIX II.

(Beveridge, *J. A. S. B.* 1878, P 92)

The Sanad of Mahasthangarh of 1096 H. *or* 1685 A.D.

میر سید سلطان محمود ماهی سوار

مقرر شد که متصدیان مهمات حال و استقبال و چودهریان و قانونگویان پرگنه سیلبرس
سرکار بازوها بدانند چون بعرض رسید که بموجب فرمان والاشان و اسناد حکام سابق خادمی
استانهٔ مقدسهٔ سلطان العارفین حضرت .... و خارج جمع مستانگره و زمین در پیچ ندی
مشموله پرگنه مذکور بسید محمد طاهر و سید عبد الرحمان و سید محمد رضا با فرزندان بلا مشارکت
غیرے مقرر است می باید که مشار الیهم را خادم روضهٔ منوره دانسته مستانگره و اراضی مسطور
را بموسی الیهم وا گذارند که در ورثهٔ خودها رسیده نظر و نیاز آستانهٔ مقدسه و واصلات آنرا خرج
خانقاه واردان و صادران و صرف معشیت خودها نموده بدعا گوئی دوام دولت اشتغال میداشته
باشند - درین باب قدغن دانند. - تحریر بتاریخ ۷ شهر جمادی الاول سنه ۳۰ جلوس - مطابق
سن ۱۰۹۶ هجری قلمی شد فقط *

پادشاه
عالم گیر غازی
کوکلتاس
مظفر جنگ بهادر

Translation.

It has been ordered that the Mutasaddis of all present and future matters of government, and the Chaudhuris and Kanungos of Pargana Silbaris in Sirkar Bazuha should bear in mind that, inasmuch as it has come to the knowledge of government that according to the *farmans* and *sanads*. granted by former rulers, the service of the sacred shrine of the king of saints, Hazrat............... and income of Mastangarh and the land comprised within the bend of the river, in the said Pargana, have been settled on Sayyid Muhammad Tahir and on Sayyid Abdur-rahman and on Sayyid Muhammad Raza and on their children, without anyone else being a partner, it is necessary that the above-mentioned persons should be looked upon as the servitors of the illuminated shrine, and that they should be left in possession of Mastangarh and of the above described lands, so that the lands may go down to their heirs ; that they may perform the vows and prayers as usual at this holy shrine ; that they may apply the income to defraying the expenditure of the religious house, on travellers, and on themselves

for their own livelihood, so that they may occupy themselves with loyal prayers for the continuance of the present government. Every care is to be taken in this matter.

Written on the 7th Jumada I, of the 30th year of the present reign, corresponding to the year of the Hijra 1096.

(Signed) Muzaffar Jang Bahadur, foster-brother (*kokultash*) of Alamgir Padshah-i-Ghazi.

Note.

It is impossible to reconcile the particulars given in the *sanad* copy with historical facts. First, the name should be Muzaffar *Husain* not Muzaffar *Jang.* It is possible that the copyist mistook حسین for جنگ . Secondly, Muzaffar Husain Kokultash (also called Fidai Khan A'zam Kokah, *kokah* being the same as *kokultash*) was governor of Bengal from the middle of 1088 A.H., (A.D. 1677) *i.e.* the 20th year of Alamgir, to the 9th (or 12th) Rabi II, 1089 (*i.e.* the 21st year of Alamgir), when he died at Dhaka.

But the 7th Jumada I, 1096 (1685 A.D.) falls in the 28th year of Alamgir, whose 30th year commences with the 1st Ramazan 1097 (A.D. 1685).

The name of the saint is written at the top instead of in its proper place in the body of the deed, in order to do him honour. This is in accordance with Hindu customs, as may be seen in *sanads* for lands dedicated to an idol.

APPENDIX III.

Inscription on the Mosque at Mahasthan of 1130 H. *or* 1718 A.D.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

چراغ و مسجد و محراب و منبر

ابو بکر و عمر و عثمان و حیدر

براه حق خدا دل مسجدی ساخت

چه خوب و خوش عبادت خانه پرداخت

چون خبر جست تاریخش خرد گفت

جز این به معبدی دیگر کی اراست

بسال هفتم عهد شاه فرخ

بروز عید اتمامش نکو یافت

Translation.

In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Compassionating. There is no deity but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.

The lamp, the mosque, the arch and the pulpit (of the faith are) Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Haidar (i.e. Ali). Khodādil (pious-hearted) built a mosque as an act of piety. What a beautiful and pleasant house of prayer did he build! When I sought its date, Wisdom said 'When did anyone adorn a better place of worship than this ?' (*i.e.* 1130 H.). In the seventh year of the reign of Shah Farrukh (Siyar) on the day of Id, was its completion well made.

APPENDIX IV.

Coins and Inscription of Mahmud Shah I.

(H. 846 to 864; A.D. 1442 to 1459).
(Bloohmann, *J. A. S. B.* 1875, p. 288).

The chronology of the reign of this king, which was hitherto one of the obscurest portions of Bengal History, has been further cleared up by a small but important *trouvaille* of eight silver coins struck by him. The coins were found by Major W. W. Hume at Mahasthan (Mostan) Garh, seven miles north of Bogra: four of them were sent to the Society by Mr. C. J. O'Donnell, C.S., who in the last number of the Journal gave a description of the place, and the other four were received from Mr. E. Vesey Westmacott, C.S. The eight coins have been figured on Pl. XI, Nos. 2 to 9. Five of them have years, so that the ascertained dates of Mahmud Shah's reign are now—846, 84*, 852, 858, 859, 861, 862, 863, 28th Zil Hajjah 863.

Nos. 2, 3, and 9 of the coins are very rude specimens of engraving; and if the last had not been found together with the others, I would be inclined to attribute it to Mahmud Shah II, as the *kunyah* looks more like 'Abul Mujahid' than like 'Abul Muzaffar.' All the coins bear numerous shroff marks.§

1. *Vide* Pl. XI, No. 2. New variety. Silver. A.H. 84* No mint-town. Weight, 164·97 grains.

Obverse ………… المؤيد بتائيدالرحمن حجت

Margin ضرب ……… سنه * ٨٣

Reverse— ناصر الدنيا و الدين ابو المظفر محمود شاه سلطان

The legend is the same as on Col. Hyde's unique Mahmud Shah of 846, published by me in *J.A.S.B.*, 1874, p. 295.

2. *Vide* Pl. XI, No. 3, Obverse as reverse of No. 1; Reverse illegible, probably the same as in Nos. 5, 7, 8, 9, weight, 165.65 grains.

3. *Vide* Pl. XI, No. 4. A.H. 852. Weight, 164.41 grains.

Obverse—as in No. 3

§ The object of these marks, which are common even on early Bengal coins, was to depreciate the coins. The real commerce of the country was carried on in cowries, as no copper was issued; and it suited the bankers and money-changers, when coins bearing the new year were issued, arbitrarily to declare that the coins of the past year, and those of all previous years, were no longer *kulldar* (کلدار, from the Arabic *kull*, all) *i.e.*, all-having, of full value. Hence they disfigured the coins, to the great loss of the public, by small circular stamps, or longitudinal notches so that it is a wonder that so many coins have come down to us with clear dates. Coins of former years, or coins thus marked by shroffs (صراف), were often called *sanat*, pl. of *sanah*, a year. *Vide* also Buchanan (Martin's Edition), II, p. 1006.

Margin— ضرب .... فی ۸۵۲

Reverse— خلد الله ملکه و سلطانه

4. *Vide* Pl. XI, No. 5. Weight, 164.49 grains. A.H. 858. Struck at Mahmudabad.

Obverse—As in No. 3.

Reverse— نائب غوث الاسلام و المسلمین خلد ملکه ۸۵۸ محمود اباد

5. *Vide* Pl. XI, No. 6. Weight, 165.68 grains. Mahmudabad? The legend of both faces as on Col. Hyde's coin.

6. *Vide* Pl. XI, No. 7. Weight, 166.2 grains. A.H. 862. The obverse contains the lozenge and square, and the empty spaces of the corners are filled with little crosses, as on Col. Hyde's coin. The reverse contains nine scollops along the margin.

Obverse and reverse as in coin No. 5, but no mint town.

7. *Vide* Pl. XI, No. 8. Weight, 164.28 grains. A.H. 862. The obverse and reverse have each ten scollops along the margin. Legend as in coin No. 5. The year is expressedly في سنه ۸۶۲

8. *Vide* Pl. XI, No. 9. Weight 164.77 grains. Legend as in preceding, but no year.

The Mint town of Mahmudabad on coin No. 5 is new. If it does not refer to some place within the extensive walls of Gaur, it may have reference to Sirkar Mahmudabad (Western Faridpur and Northern Nadiya).

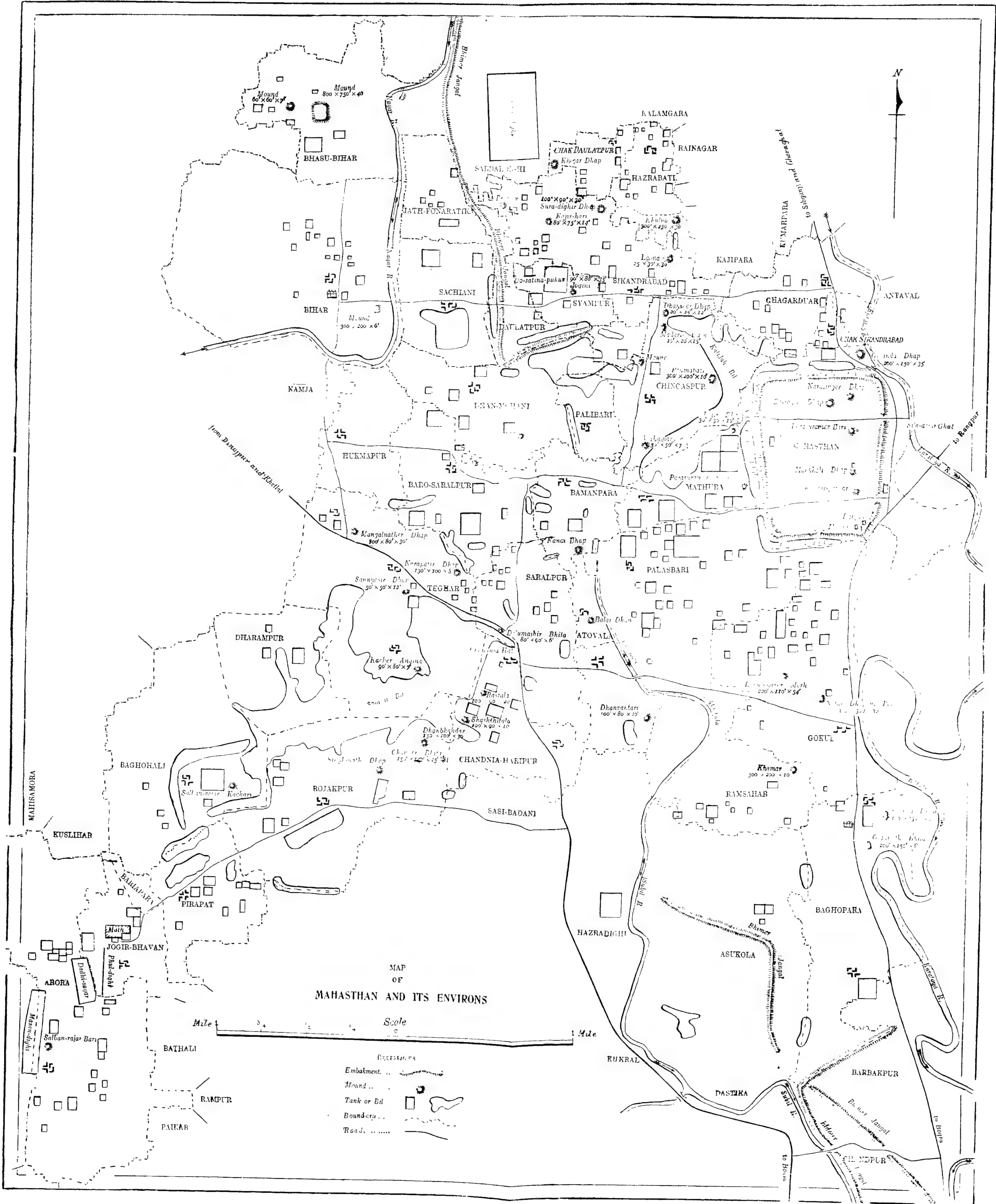
General Cunningham has sent me a rubbing of the following inscription belonging to Mahmud's reign. The rubbing is taken from inside the Kotwali Gate in Gaur, and refers in all probability to the bridge of five arches near it.

بناء هذه القنطره فی زمن سلطان العادل ناصر الدنیا و الدین ابو المظفر محمود شاه السلطان
في الخامس من الصفر ختمه الله بالخیر و الظفر سنه اثني وستین و ثما نمایه *

The building of this bridge (took place) in the time of the just king, Nasiruddunya waddin Abul Muzaffar Mahmud Shah, the king. On the 5th day of Safar (may God allow the month to end with success and victory!) 862 [23rd December, 1457.]

The inscription measures 1½ ft. by 13 in. The usual phrase 'May God perpetuate his rule and kingdom'! is left out.

This is the missing inscription No 37, alluded to on p. 19, *Proceedings A. S. B.*, January, 1873.


MAP
OF
MAHASTHAN AND ITS ENVIRONS
Scale
Mile
1 Mile
Embakment
Mound
Tank or Bil
Boundary
Road
N
BHASU-BIHAR
BIHAR
SACHIANI
KALAMGARA
RAINAGAR
CHAK DAULATPUR
HAZRABATI
JATH-PONARATIK
SIKANDRABAD
KAJIPARA
ANTAVAL
CHAGARDUAR
CHAK SIKANDRABAD
SYAMPUR
DAULATPUR
CHINCASPUR
PALIBARI
NAMJA
HUKMAPUR
BARO-SARALPUR
BAMANPARA
MATHURA
MAHASTHAN
PALASBARI
SARALPUR
TEGHAR
ATOVALA
DHARAMPUR
GOKUL
BAGHOHALI
CHANDNIA-HARIPUR
ROJAKPUR
SASI-BADANI
RAMSAHAR
MAHISAMORA
KUSLIHAR
PIRAPAT
HAZRADIGHI
BAGHOPARA
ASUKOLA
JOGIR-BHAVAN
ARORA
BATHALI
RAMPUR
PAIKAR
RUKRAL
DASTIKA
BARBAKPUR
Mangalnather Dhap
Kanai Dhap
Khamar
Dhanvantari
Salban-rajar Bari
Dadhi-sagar
Math
Bhimer Jangal
from Dinajpur and Khetlal
to Rangpur
to Bogra



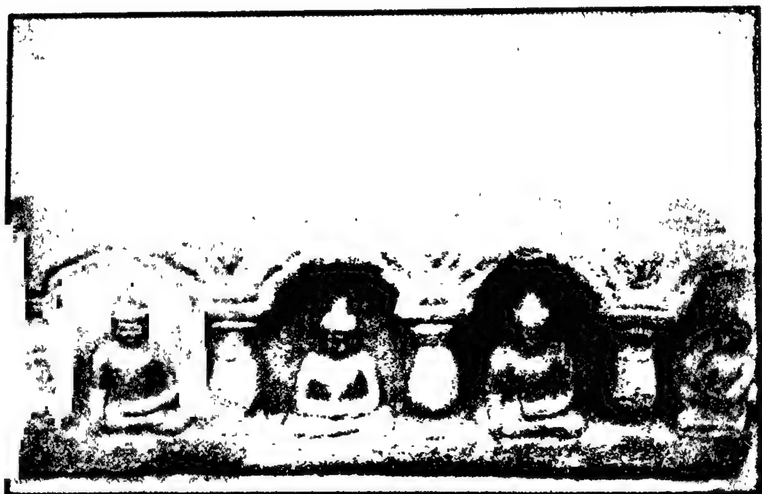
1. Southern part of East rampart, and tank of Inscription (p. 3 & p. 8)



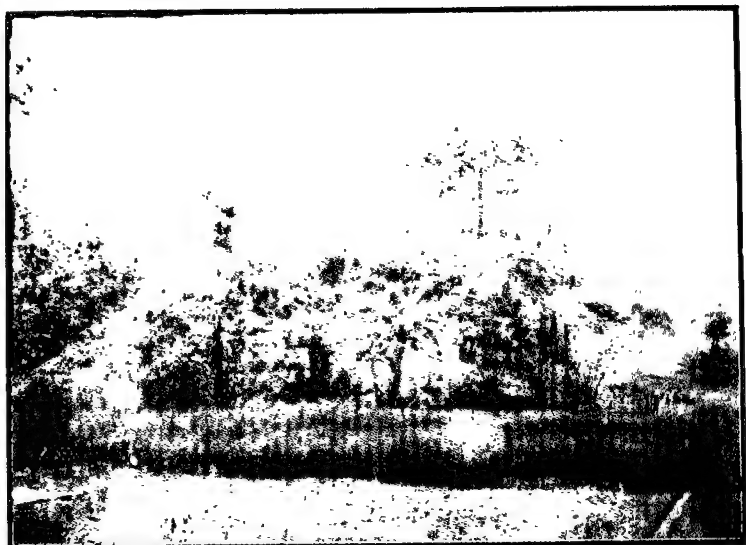
2. Gilt bronze Manjusri (p. 11)



3. Bronze Bodhisattva (p. 11)



4. Three-Buddha stone (p. 7)



5. Merh mound of Gokul (p. 10)

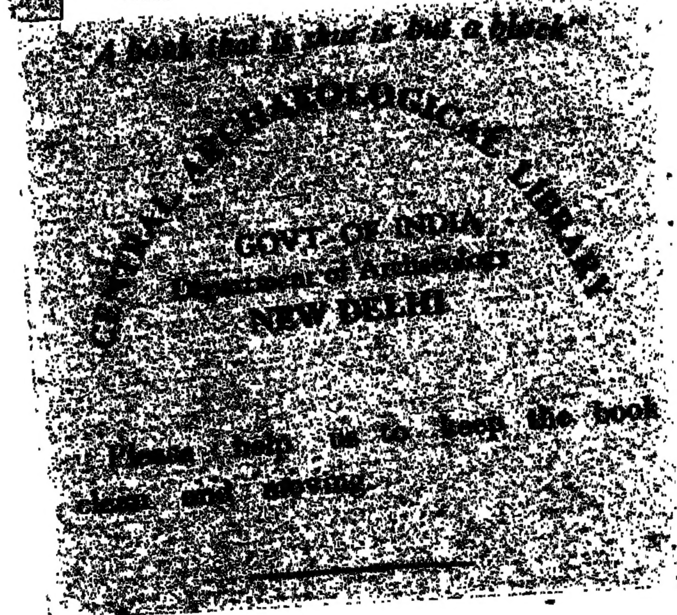


6. Mangal-nather Dhap in Teghar (p. 14)

7. Mahasthan Sanskrit Inscription (p. 8)

N.C

6/8/75


"A book that is shut is but a block"
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